

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 0802

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR DA

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON FOREIGN POLICY

SUMMARY: THE ANNUAL FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT

MARCH 18 PROVIDED THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS THE

NEW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY.

FONMIN K. B. ANDERSEN'S OPENING STATEMENT CONFIRMED THE

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CONTINUATION OF TRADITIONAL DANISH FOREIGN POLICY IN

ITS MAJOR ELEMENTS - THE COMMITMENT TO NATO, TO THE COMMON MARKET AND TO THE UN. AS EXPECTED, HOWEVER, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE SOMEWHAT MORE PRO-PRG THAN ITS PREDECESSOR AND WILL BE MORE POSITIVE TOWARD EMERGING THIRD WORLD MOVEMENTS IN GENERAL. THE HIGHLY FAVORABLE ATTITUDE EXPRESSED ON POLITICAL COOPERATION AMONG EC COUNTRIES MAY PRESAGE A GRADUAL ABANDONMENT OF PREVIOUS SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION TO POLITICAL CENTRALIZATION WITHIN THE EC CONTEXT. THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE PRESENT PORTUGUESE SITUATION WAS VERY CAUTIOUSLY PHRASED AND ATTEMPTS DURING THE SUBSEQUENT DEBATE TO FORCE MORE SPECIFIC STATEMENT DID NOT SUCCEED. THE DEBATE THROUGHOUT WAS DESULTORY AND POORLY ATTENDED, GIVING RISE TO CRITICISM THAT THE ANNUAL PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN POLICY REVIEW SOON SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AN OUTMODED TRADITION. END SUMMARY.

1. ANDERSEN'S PRESENTATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY WAS A HIGHLY TRADITIONAL AND UNPROVOCATIVE ONE. STRESS WAS LAID ON THE "NEW DIMENSION" IN DANISH FOREIGN POLICY - THE FACT THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF PROBLEMS CAN ONLY BE SOLVED IN THE MULTI-LATERAL CONTEXT. ANDERSEN CITED IN THIS CONNECTION FOOD SCARCITY, ENERGY SUPPLY AND RAW MATERIALS, AS WELL AS QUESTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE LAW OF THE SEA. NO ONE OBJECTED TO THE FONMIN'S USE OF THE PHRASE "NEW DIMENSION" TO WHAT HAS LONG BEEN A FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTIC OF DANISH FOREIGN POLICY, ITS EMPHASIS ON MULTI-LATERALISM.

2. ANDERSEN DID SUGGEST THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE INCREASED ATTENTION TO NORIDC COOPERATION. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY SPOKESMAN KJELD OLESEN NOTED THAT THIS EMPHASIS WAS IN CONTRAST TO THE PREVIOUS LIBERAL GOVERNMENT'S NEGLECT OF THAT AREA. IN USUAL SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FASHION, NORDIC COOPERATION WAS DESCRIBED AS COMPLEMENTARY TO, NOT COMPETITIVE WITH, DANISH COOPERATION WITH THE EC.

3. TWO NUANCE SHIFTS WERE DISCERNIBLE IN THE FONMIN'S
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PRESENTATION, HOWEVER. THE FIRST, ABOUT WHICH THE EMBASSY HAD BEEN WARNED BY MFA OFFICIALS, CONCERNED FUTURE POLICY TOWARD THE PARTIES OF THE INDOCHINA CONFLICT. ANDERSEN STATED "THE GOVERNMENT'S WISH TO FOLLOW DEVELOPMENTS AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE AND TO ASSIST TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE IN THE RELIEF OF THE SUFFERING IS DEMONSTRATED IN OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME AND OUR READINESS, WITHIN THE LIMITS SET BY OUR

POLICY OF RECOGNITION, TO PERPETUATE AND EXPAND OUR CONTACTS WITH ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT - AND ALSO, AS HERETOFORE, WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRG." (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THIS STATEMENT DOES NOT IMPLY RECOGNITION OF THE PRG, IT DOES IMPLY THAT PRG INFORMATION OFFICERS IN COPENHAGEN MAY BE GIVEN DIRECT ACCESS TO MFA OFFICIALS. THIS HAS HERETOFOR NOT BEEN THE PRACTICE. IN THE SUBSEQUENT DEBATE, ANDERSEN ELABORATED ON THIS CHANGE, MAKING THE POINT THAT THE DANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD SUPPORT OBSERVER RPT OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE PRG IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. NO FORMAL INCREASE IN STATUS, ALONG THE LINES OF WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN PARIS AND STOCKHOLM, IS EXPECTED.)

4. THE SECOND SHIFT OF EMPHASIS LAY IN THE VERY POSITIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE RESULTS OF POLITICAL COOPERATION AMONG THE EC COUNTRIES. THIS MIGHT INDICATE AN INTENTION BY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO ABANDON THEIR PREVIOUS STATED OPPOSITION TO MOVEMENTS TOWARD POLITICAL UNIFICATION WITHIN THE EC. THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IS KNOWN TO BE FUNDAMENTALLY IN FAVOR OF INCREASED POLITICAL COOPERATION BUT HAS BEEN TIED BY THE STANCE TAKEN DURING THE EC REFERENDUM IN 1972 IN FAVOR OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION BUT AGAINST POLITICAL UNION.

5. ON THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL, THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED SIMPLY THAT THE DANISH GOVERNMENT HAD "FOLLOWED THE DECOMONIZATION POLICY OF THE NEW PORTUGUESE REGIME WITH MUCH RESPECT" AND THAT IT INTENDED "DIRECTLY AND THROUGH THE EC TO PROVIDE SUCH SUPPORT AS CAN AND WOULD ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DEMOCRATIC GOVERN-
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MENT IN PORTUGAL." IN SUBSEQUENT DEBATE, SPOKESMEN FROM PARTIES OF BOTH THE LEFT AND RIGHT PRESSED FOR MORE SPECIFIC EVALUATION OF CURRENT EVENTS IN PORTUGAL AND A STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS. IN REPLY TO THE FORMER, ANDERSEN RELIED HEAVILY ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LAINGEN'S MARCH 14 TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE (A COPY HAD BEEN PROVIDED BY THE EMBASSY), HE REFUSED TO ELABORATE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS, STATING THAT HE CONSIDERED IT "WISEST" IN THE PRESENT SITUATION NOT TO SAY TOO MUCH.

6. THE SPOKESMEN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, IB NORLUND AND OF THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S PARTY, GERT PETERSEN, PRESSED TWO ISSUES IN THE SUBSEQUENT DEBATE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME FOLLOW-UP ORGANIZATION TO THE CSCE TREATY AND

ACCEPTANCE OF THE SO-CALLED KEKKONEN PLAN FOR A NORDIC NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE. ANDERSEN REPLIED WITH THE STANDARD DANISH POSITION ON CSCE FOLLOW-UP AND TURNED ASIDE THE KEKKONEN PLAN ISSUE WITH THE COMMENT THAT "THE NORDIC AREA IS FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IF ONE SEEKS TO FORMALIZE A SITUATION THAT EXISTS IN FACT, ONE CAN RAISE DOUBTS ABOUT THE POLICY ONE IS PURSUING."

7. UN ISSUES. ANDERSEN WAS CONSIDERABLY Milder THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, OVE GULDBERG, IN EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF BLOC ALLIANCES AND VOTING IN THE UNITED NATIONS. HE STATED THAT HIS PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT A DANISH ABSTENTION RATHER THAN A NO-VOTE ON THE CHARTER ON ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF STATES WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE APPROPRIATE FOR DENMARK THAN ITS NO-VOTE DURING THE LAST SESSION, AND ADDED: "INSPIRED BY A POSITIVE WISH TO MAKE A REAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRESS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WE WILL TAKE UP FOR OVERALL REVIEW THE RESERVATIONS MADE BY DENMARK IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS." HE CAME OUT STRONGLY FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSALITY AND CITED THE CASES OF SOUTH AFRICA WHERE "WE CANNOT VOTE TO OUST SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE UNITED NATIONS" AND OF ISRAEL, IN WHICH CONNECTION HE REJECTED THE "RAMPANT POLITICIZATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES SUCH AS WE SAW IT, FOR EXAMPLE, IN CONNECTION

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WITH THE DELIBERATIONS ON THE REALTIONS OF ISRAEL TO UNESCO."

8. THE DEBATE THAT FOLLOWED WAS LONG AND UNINSPIRING, LEADING ERIK NINN-HANSEN, FORMER CONSERVATIVE DEFENSE MINISTER, TO SUGGEST THAT THE ANNUAL DEBATE MERELY SERVED TO PREVENT THE FOLKETING FROM CONCERNING ITSELF WITH ACTUAL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES WHEN THEY WERE CURRENT AND WHEN A DANISH POLICY STATEMENT MIGHT HAVE SOME EFFECT. ANDERSEN ADMITTED THE, AT LEAST, PARTIAL FORCE OF THIS ARGUMENT AND DECLARED HIMSELF WILLING TO SEE ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC FOREIGN POLICY DISCUSSIONS IN PARLIAMENT FROM TIME TO TIME.

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